


[Site Overview](#)
[Press Releases and Stories](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[Photography & Multimedia](#)
[Links](#)
[Home](#)
[Logon](#)

Office of External Affairs
U.S. Coast Guard

**U.S. Department of
Homeland Security
United States
Coast Guard**



Date: SEP. 07, 2007

Contact: LT. Mark Molavi
(832) 256-7568

Press Release

CONTAMINATED WATER SPILLS INTO COTTON PATCH BAYOU

HOUSTON - The Coast Guard is responding to a chemical spill in Cotton Patch Bayou in the Houston Ship Channel of water contaminated with phosphoric acid.

A Coast Guard pollution investigation team conducted a preliminary investigation and, due to the low pH readings in the immediate area of the spill, determined the release posed a threat to the environment and public safety.

The Agrifos Fertilizer Company reportedly notified the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) on Aug. 16 of the initial release. The Coast Guard became aware of the situation on Sept. 5. According to the company, the cause of the release was due to a breach in a containment wall caused by heavy rains. In order to relieve pressure on the wall, the company initiated emergency pumping of the contaminated water into Cotton Patch Bayou. Facility representatives have hired technical experts to assess the condition of the wall and implement a plan to fortify the weak areas of the wall.

An estimated ten million gallons of contaminated water has been pumped into the bayou to date. The area is showing impacts from the acidic release, including dead vegetation and marine life and pH readings of 2.0 to 2.2 have been recorded in the bayou. The Coast Guard has issued a Notice of Federal Interest to Agrifos for possible violations of the Clean Water Act.

The Coast Guard, Texas Parks and Wildlife, TCEQ, Environmental Protection Agency, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric are responding to the spill.

###

U.S. Coast Guard - Saving lives since 1790

 [printer friendly](#)